

FONO' LÁSZLÓ

1975

*The Fonos:
With Love
And Paprika*

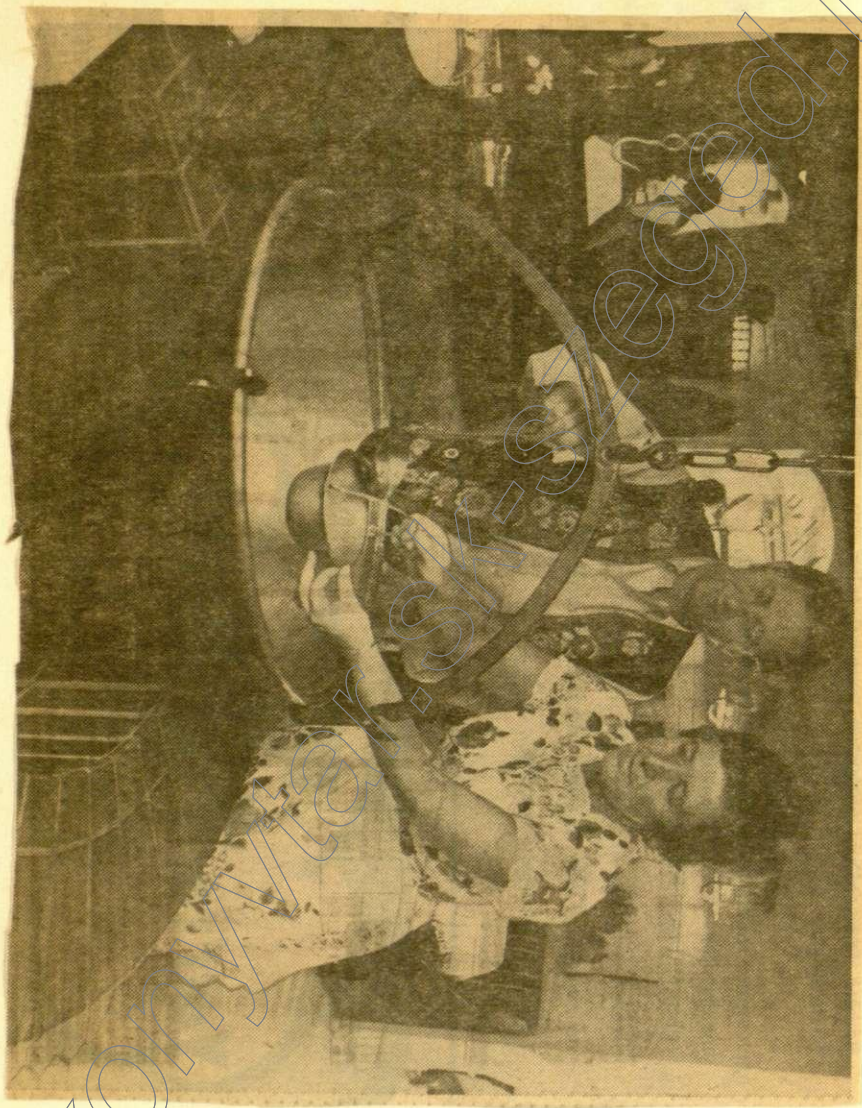
By Marian Burros

SAN FRANCISCO, Calif.—Paulette and Lazlo Fono sold their first restaurant idea to a national food company which turned it into a very successful chain.

They have no intention of parting with their newest and equally successful restaurant, Paprikas Fono, which overlooks San Francisco Bay and the Golden Gate Bridge from Ghiradelli Square. It serves only the authentic cooking of the Fonos' native Hungary from which they escaped in 1957.

Perhaps the Fonos' instant success is due to attention to detail and intimate knowledge of the cultural influences which have affected the course of Hungarian cooking. People began flocking to Paprikas Fono the moment it opened a year ago. They are the chefs, the creators of the dishes. The man who does the actual cooking must follow their recipes, though Paulette Fono said: "We don't freeze the people—it's a constant learning process."

Professionally trained help is purposely not hired "so that we can mold them our way," Mrs. Fono explained. Their way is pleasant, well-paced service from smiling young people. The restaurant's panelled rooms and glassed-in porch with a spectacular view are de-



Cooking with Love and Paprika



FONOS, From E1

corated with brightly colored Hungarian peasant fabrics. The focal point is a huge iron kettle from which *gulyas* — the thick meal-in-itself herdsman's soup — is served.

Over a three-hour sampling lunch that included a cold plate with lipitauer cheese spread; *langos*, a hot fried bread which is rubbed with a garlic clove just before eating; four main dishes rich in sour cream, potatoes and onions; several salads, four desserts and two bottles of a light, slightly fruity Hungarian wine, Mrs. Fono talked about the influences on her native cooking which she said is "much lighter than Austrian," though most people seem to confuse the two. The confusion, according to Mrs. Fono, goes back to the days of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, which was dissolved by World War I.

The *gulyas*, which somehow became goulash complete with sour cream, (but not at Paprikas Fono) goes back even further, to Magyar herdsman who roamed what is now Hungary, between the 11th and 13th centuries.

Gulya means cattle herd *gulyas* means herdsmen and also the dish itself, which began as herbs, dried meat and liquid cooked over an open fire. There was no paprika in it at the time because paprika didn't make its way from India to Hungary until the 1500s when the Turkish conquerors brought it.

Hungary became famous for its paprikash cooking because its cooks learned how to use it so skillfully, as more than just a color enhancer. They use it for flavoring, so much more than just a sprinkling on top is needed. They also use it as a thickener. "You need

two to three tablespoons for just one little dish," Mrs. Fono said. "And you have to know when to add it. It must be dissolved in fat."

Mrs. Fono is willing to admit that Hungarians "don't know how to use most fats in cooking," but she says that Hungarian pastries, which are made with butter are better than Austrian because they are lighter; a fact she attributes to the French influence.

The French influence is obvious in the paper thin pancakes, called *palacsintas* in Hungary, but *crepes* in France. Mrs. Fono says there was a "heavy French influence in my home, which enabled us to open up the Magic Pan," where stuffed crepes make up the basic menu.

Mrs. Fono's pleasant countenance clouds over when she talks about the Magic Pan, which the couple sold to Quaker Oats in 1969 and helped turn into a nationwide chain. On August 1 of this year the Fonos filed a multimillion dollar law suit against the cereal company, alleging that it had not lived up to its contractual obligations.

The Fonos have tried to put all of that unpleasantness behind them and concentrate on those small details which make the difference between an ordinary restaurant and one where people wait in line to eat.

Because Hungarian sausages aren't available in San Francisco, Lazlo Fono spent three weeks in New York learning how to smoke meats and make sausages. Mrs. Fono agrees it "take so much time and effort," but thinks "it's worth the trouble."

It's for the same reason, the Fonos peel all the tomatoes, freshly cook the beets which go into the salads, cut their own meat and use absolutely no frozen or canned foods unless they are unavailable any other way.

She is almost apologetic about her concern with small things. "I'm sorry," she says, "but I believe in what we are doing."

Still, she is amazed that "people are paying to eat our food," in what she calls "the toughest restaurant town in the country."

But they do. Several hundred each night.

The recipes are adapted from Paprika Fono.

GALUSKA

Makes 6 servings

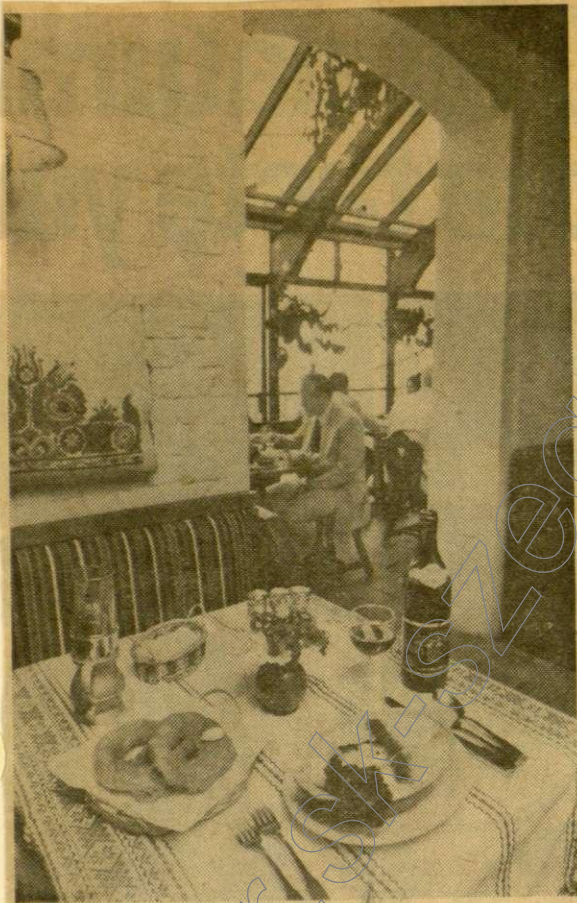
- 3 cups flour
- 2 tablespoons salt
- 3 whole eggs
- 1 cup water
- 1 tablespoon oil
- 4 tablespoons butter
- 1 cup shredded sharp cheese, optional

Place flour and 1 tablespoon of salt into large mixing bowl and mix well with wooden spoon. Add eggs and water, using wooden spoon and beating motion. Mix until evenly blended and no large lumps of egg and flour remain. Allow 2 minutes for mixing. Scrape off side of bowl and pour a teaspoon of oil on top of dough to prevent from drying.

In large pot, bring 3 quarts of water and 1 tablespoon salt to boil. Take small cutting board. Place 1/3 of dough on it. Dip knife into boiling water and cut a narrow strip of dough, approximately 1/4 inch. Lean cutting board over top of pot and cut quickly, with a

cutting and scraping motion, scraping dough off board, directly into boiling water. Dip knife frequently into boiling water. Repeat until all dough is gone.

Wait until Galuska come to top of water. Allow to boil briefly. Stir with strainer, then take Galuska out with this strainer and quickly wash with cold water. Place in ovenproof serving dish. Dribble some melted butter on top of Galuska. Repeat until all dough is used up. Mix Galuska thoroughly so that it is well-coated with butter and cheese. Serve immediately, or reheat in same dish by placing Galuska (covered) in a 350-degree oven for 25 to 30 minutes.



Stephanie Maze photo

Interior of the Paprika House in San Francisco.

PAULETTE'S TORTA

Approximately 12 to 14 slices

- 8 eggs
- 8 tablespoons sugar
- 6 tablespoons walnuts
(ground)
- 2 tablespoons flour
- Filling (see recipe)

In large mixing bowl, beat egg yolks and sugar

until mixture is pale yellow and stiff and forms a ribbon as you beat it. Mix together flour and walnuts. Add to yolk mixture and mix well with beater.

In separate bowl, beat egg whites until shiny and stiff. Add $\frac{1}{2}$ of beaten whites to yolk mixture. With spatula mix gently but well. This will lighten texture of batter and make it easy to fold in rest of whites without breaking the foam.

Prepare a $10\frac{1}{2} \times 15\frac{1}{2} \times 1$ -inch baking sheet by greasing and then lining with greased wax paper. Butter evenly and dust with flour. Spread batter evenly in prepared pan and bake at 350 degrees for 25 to 30 minutes.

After baking, gently invert cake on clean towel, remove wax paper and roll up cake in it, starting at wide side. Cool and spread with filling.

TORTA CREAM

- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup milk
- 1 teaspoon instant coffee powder, dissolved in $\frac{1}{3}$ cup fresh coffee
- 1 cup sugar
- 8 tablespoons cocoa
- 3 sticks or $\frac{1}{4}$ pound sweet butter (unsalted) at room temperature
- Grated semi-sweet chocolate

Dissolve instant coffee powder in hot coffee and mix with milk and sugar in small saucepan. Cook on medium heat until sugar is just dissolved. Do not boil, otherwise mixture will separate. Smooth cocoa through strainer to get rid of lumps and stir in coffee mixture. Beat with hand beater or electric beater or wire whisk to blend evenly. Let mixture cool to room temperature. Add butter and beat until mixture is smooth and creamy. Refrigerate for 40 minutes; no longer or mixture will become too firm.

Measure a piece of waxed paper larger than the torta and unroll torta on it. After torta is completely cooled, spread cream mixture over it until it is about $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch thick. Roll up torta very gently from wide side, helping with waxed paper and spread remaining cream over top and sides of roll. Sprinkle with grated chocolate. Refrigerate.

PAPRIKAS CHICKEN

Makes 6 Servings

- 1 chicken 2 to 3 pounds, cut in serving pieces or 3 breasts and 3 legs and thighs
- 2 to 3 medium onions
- 5 tablespoons oil
- 3 tablespoons Hungarian paprika
- 1 whole green pepper
- $1\frac{1}{2}$ cups water
- 2 teaspoons salt
- $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon white pepper
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup sour cream
- 1 rounded tablespoon flour

Use 4-to-5-quart heavy casserole with a tight-fitting lid. Cut chicken breasts in halves and disjoint legs, wash and pat dry. Season with salt. Cut onions into small cubes. Cook in oil for 5 minutes over low heat, stirring frequently until onions are light golden. Take casserole off heat, add paprika and mix well.



Place chicken on top of paprika mixture and turn pieces around to coat them well. Cook over low heat for a few minutes, stirring continuously making sure that paprika does not burn. Add salt, pepper, water and green pepper, cover. Cook over low heat for 35 minutes. Taste for seasoning and remove green pepper. Test chicken and cook an additional 15 minutes if needed.

Remove chicken pieces and prepare sauce. Mix sour cream and flour with 1 tablespoon of cold water in separate bowl. Add to sauce in pot and mix well. Replace chicken parts, cover with lid.

Serve chicken at once, or reheat over gentle low heat before serving. Do not boil.

LIPTOI CHEESE

Makes 1½ Cups

- 8 ounces cream cheese
- ¼ cup soft sweet butter
- 4 ounces farmer's cottage cheese
- 2 tablespoons chopped green onion
- ½ teaspoon caraway seed
- 1 tablespoon Hungarian paprika
- 1 teaspoon dry mustard
- 1 teaspoon anchovy paste

Blend cheeses and butter in mixing bowl. Add remaining ingredients. Mix well. Put blended cheese into small serving bowl. Chill in refrigerator for at least 30 minutes before serving.

Serve as an appetizer with dark bread and vegetables.

CUCUMBER SALAD

Makes 6 to 8 Servings

- 3 to 4 cucumbers
- 1¼ cups water
- 1 tablespoon salt
- ¼ cup sugar
- ½ cup vinegar (white distilled)
- 1 or 2 cloves garlic (mashed)

Peel cucumbers with potato peeler. Slice thinly. In mixing bowl combine salt, water, sugar, vinegar and garlic; mix well. Pour dressing over cucumbers and allow to stand for at least one hour in refrigerator before serving. Serve in large salad bowl (not wood) with some of dressing. Garnish with sour cream and paprika.

TRANSYLVANIAN CABBAGE GULYAS

Makes 8 to 10 Servings

- 2 small cloves garlic, minced
- 2 onions, medium-size, finely chopped
- 3 tablespoons oil
- 3 slices bacon, diced
- 2 pounds pork, lean boneless, cut into ½-inch cubes
- 2 tablespoons Hungarian paprika
- 1 teaspoon salt
- ¼ teaspoon caraway seeds
- ¼ teaspoon pepper
- 2 pounds sauerkraut, canned or fresh
- ½ pound sausage, smoked and sliced
- 8 ounces sour cream

Peel and chop onions. In a 4-to-6-quart cooking pot place diced bacon and oil, saute onions and garlic for 5 minutes over low heat, stirring frequently until onions are light golden. Take onion in cooking pot off heat, add paprika, and mix well. Place cubed pork on paprika mixture and turn pieces around to coat well. Cook over low heat for a few minutes, stirring continuously making sure that paprika does not burn.

Add salt, pepper and caraway and mix well. Immediately after, add enough water to cover meat. Cover cooking pot and simmer meat for 45 minutes. While meat is cooking, wash out sauerkraut under cold running water. Squeeze dry and set aside. (This procedure is not neces-

say if sauerkraut is not too
~~soon.~~ Add sauerkraut to meat
 and cook together until meat
 is done, about 15 minutes
 longer. Before serving, add
 sliced sausage and sour
 cream. Gently stir into cab-
 bage gulyas and cook on
 low heat for another 2 to 3
 minutes. Serve at once but

this dish is better when pre-
 pared a day ahead. Sour
 cream should only be added
 before serving.

RAKOTT KRUMPLI
 (Farmer's Wife Special)

Makes 10 Servings
 6 potatoes, cooked in
 their skins

- 6 hard-cooked eggs
- 5 tablespoons butter
- 4 tablespoons diced
bacon
- 2 teaspoons salt
- 1 egg yolk
- 2 pints sour cream
- ½ pound smoked
sausage, sliced

Peel and slice potatoes;
 slice hard-cooked eggs.
 Brush 3-quart baking dish
 with 2 tablespoons melted
 butter. Place ⅓ of sliced
 potatoes on bottom of dish;
 sprinkle with salt, ⅓ of ba-
 con. Place ⅓ of eggs on
 top; sprinkle with melted

butter. Mix sour cream with
 egg yolk. Spread half of
 sour cream over eggs. Place
 ⅓ of sausage over sour
 cream, top with ⅓ of pota-
 toes, salt, remaining bacon,
 melted butter, eggs, sausage
 and then remaining pota-
 toes.
 Top with remaining sour

THE WASHINGTON POST
Thursday, Sept. 4, 1975 E 17

cream to cover surface.
 Bake at 350 degrees for 30
 minutes, uncovered. To
 serve, sprinkle generously
 with paprika.
 If desired, dish may be
 refrigerated. To serve re-
 turn to room temperature
 and bake for about 40 min-
 utes at 350 degrees.

